



To: Senator Cathy Ostein, Co-Chair
Representative Toni E. Walker, Co-Chair
Members, Appropriations Committee

From: The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention

RE: H.B. 5037 – *An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2023- Allocation of Medicaid Funds*

February 23, 2022

The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (HAVI) would like to thank the Connecticut General Assembly for its passage last session of H.B. 5677, *An Act Concerning the Availability of Community Violence Prevention Services Under Medicaid*. As the Appropriations Committee considers the Governor's budget recommendations, **we strongly recommend it include a budget allocation for the Department of Social Services to fully implement this new Medicaid benefit.**

The HAVI represents 40 hospital-based and hospital-linked member programs and over 38 emerging violence intervention programs across the United States. We are a proud partner of the Connecticut Hospital-based Violence Intervention Program Collaborative.

HAVI member programs provide services to violently injured patients in both the traditional health care setting as well as the community. Hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs) vary in the specifics of their design and scope, but typically include immediate intervention in the hospital or emergency department after an injury, followed by intensive, community-based care for approximately one year after discharge.

Without intervention, these patients are at high risk for future repeat injuries, retaliatory violence, and mental health consequences, such as post-traumatic stress disorder. Research shows HVIPs are effective in reducing patients' risk of repeat injury, as well as addressing critical needs such as mental health, alcohol and substance misuse, and a variety of other patient-centered outcomes. A randomized control trial found that participants were 84% less likely to return to the hospital with a repeat injury and four times less likely to be convicted of a violent crime.



HVIPs serve violently injured victims who may be disconnected from traditional institutions and are thus difficult to reach. A distinguishing feature of the model is the role of violence prevention professionals, specially trained and certified intervention workers. These individuals, who often come from the communities they serve, provide trauma-informed crisis intervention, links to community-based services, mentoring, home visits, and long-term case management. They are a critical component of any comprehensive system to break the cycle of violence in our communities.

In 2021, the Connecticut General Assembly wisely passed H.B. 5677, providing Medicaid reimbursement for this life saving work. The bill also created training and certification requirements for frontline violence prevention professionals. Since that time, the Department of Public Health and the Department of Social Services have diligently worked to implement the legislation. Per requirements of H.B. 5677, a Medicaid State Plan Amendment will be submitted this year.

The work performed by these agencies has been extremely productive and is on-track to carry out the vision of the H.B. 5677. Still, it is imperative that funding be included in the budget to cover the new benefit's costs to continue progress with the bill's implementation.

The HAVI is proud of the bold legislation passed last session to support survivors of community violence through the Medicaid program. As the first state in the Nation to pass such a benefit, it was both wise and forward thinking. In this subsequent year, we ask that you continue forward and provide budgetary funds to finalize this work.

Sincerely,

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